

ATTACHMENT A

Remarks

By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended for better clarity, and a substitute figure 2 provided. It is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

Initially it will be noted that an interview was conducted with the examiner (and his supervisor) on February 6, 2004 to discuss the present invention and the outstanding final Office Action. That interview proved very helpful, and examiner's comments and consideration were appreciated. The remarks provided below will also reference the discussions at the interview as appropriate.

In the *Drawings* section of the outstanding Office Action, figure 2 was objected to (as more completely determined at the interview) for failing to show the required starting connection for the sequence line ending at the sequence line connecting elements 117 and 128. This problem evidently arose when figure 2 was originally copied and filed, resulting in a right-hand vertical portion of this sequence line being cut off (and also causing the previous objection to figure 2 for an improper right margin). By this Amendment and as agreed to at the interview, the required connection is now provided as would be self-evident from the "NO" logic gate provided in element 127 not having a sequence line issuing therefrom, and which is now connected to the previously unconnected sequence line without a starting point immediately adjacent thereto. This missing sequence line would also be apparent to those of ordinary skill from the

description provided in the specification of the function of element 128, as well as from the priority document which correctly had this sequence line depicted.

In the *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112* section, independent claim 1 was rejected for being indefinite for failure to have proper antecedent basis for the “actuating step”. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to provide the needed antecedent basis as shown and as also agreed to at the interview. Further, the superfluous “first of all” has also been deleted from claim 1 and as well from claim 9 as requested by the examiner at the interview. In view of these changes, it is submitted that all pending claims are now definite.

In the *Claims Rejection – 35 USC § 102* section, claims 1-7 and 9 were rejected as being anticipated by the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent. However, for the following reasons as discussed at the interview, it was agreed that independent claims 1 and 9, and the remaining claims dependent therefrom, are all allowable over this reference.

At the interview, reference was made to figure 2 to show that whenever the back rest actuator was actuated, the foot rest actuator was also (automatically) actuated to retract (see block 114) and then to return to the initial position (see block 126). This actuation of the foot rest occurred without any action by the user on the foot rest actuator itself. Both independent claims 1 and 9 claim this automatic actuation feature of the second actuator.

The Kodaverdian ‘587 patent discloses a seat with various actuators and a CPU to control operations thereof. In particular, the CPU will “automatically” activate a foot rest actuator to retract the foot rest in order to prevent damage thereto when an associated

leg rest is moved (towards the floor) and the leg rest exceeds a specific angle θ (where damage to the foot rest might occur upon impact with the floor).

From the above, it is clear that the “automatic” operation of the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent foot rest is made only in response to the sensing of the leg rest exceeding a predetermined angle θ . This operation differs from the present invention as claimed, in that the foot rest (for example) is (automatically) moved always (or whenever) the back rest (for example) is moved. It will also be noted that the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent does not disclose or make obvious the return (movement in the opposite direction) of the foot rest to the original (un-retracted) position in any manner as is further claimed in independent claim 1.

In the Action, the examiner noted that the foot rest of the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent might operate in a manner similar to the claimed invention if the operator were pushing both the leg rest and foot rest actuators when the leg rest reached the angle θ . While the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent is silent as to what would happen if this occurred as noted at the interview, it is also largely irrelevant as was also noted at the interview. In this scenario proposed by the examiner, the user is required to separately actuate two actuators – whereas the present invention claims only the actuation of one actuator results in the actuation of the second actuator as claimed. Thus, the proposed scenario does not read on what is claimed in any event.

In view of the above as noted at the interview, it was agreed that claims 1 and 9 were not anticipated nor made obvious by the Kodaverdian ‘587 patent. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 9, and claims 2-8 and 10-11 dependent respectively therefrom, are now all allowable.

Also in the *Claims Rejection – 35 USC § 102* section, claims 1-11 were rejected as being anticipated by the Tual patent. However, for the following reasons as discussed at the interview, it was agreed that independent claims 1 and 9, and the remaining claims dependent therefrom, are all allowable over this reference.

The Tual patent discloses an installation for operating seat modules. In particular, when an actuator for a module is actuated in a given direction, the current intensity consumed by that actuator is monitored. If the consumed current intensity is higher than a predetermined maximum value (signaling a malfunction or where the movement is being prevented by hitting the floor for example), then that actuator is moved in an opposite direction. Thus, it is apparent that the Tual patent teaching is applicable to only a single actuator.

In the Action, the examiner noted that the foot rest of the Tual patent might operate in a manner similar to the claimed invention if the operator were pushing both the leg rest and foot rest actuators when the leg rest hit the floor. While the Tual patent discloses that this would result in a reversal (retraction) of the foot rest, this is similarly (as with the Kodaverdian '587 patent) largely irrelevant as was also noted at the interview. In this scenario proposed by the examiner, the user is required to separately actuate two actuators – whereas the present invention claims only the actuation of one actuator to result in the specific actuation of both actuators as claimed. Thus, the proposed scenario in the Tual patent also does not read on what is being claimed.

In view of the above as noted at the interview, it was agreed that claims 1 and 9 were not anticipated nor made obvious by the Tual patent. Therefore, independent claims

1 and 9, and claims 2-8 and 10-11 dependent respectively therefrom, are now all allowable.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and such action is solicited.

ATTACHMENT B

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method of managing the kinematics of a seat, said seat having at least three seat elements that are able to move with respect to each other and said seat having at least two actuators actuatable in different directions for moving the three elements with respect to each other, ~~wherein, when~~ said method comprising the step of:
actuating a first actuator of said at least two actuators in one direction, said actuating of the first actuator step always including a step of actuating a second actuator of said at least two actuators ~~first of all~~ in a given direction and then in an opposite direction to said given direction.
2. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the actuating step of the second actuator in said given direction is effected for a first predetermined duration.
3. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the actuating step of the second actuator in said opposite direction is effected for a second predetermined duration.
4. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 3, wherein the first and second predetermined durations are such that, according to a speed of movement of the second actuator in the given direction and in the opposite direction, the movement travels in both the given and opposite directions are substantially identical.
5. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein, before the movement of the second actuator in said given direction, the step of activating the second actuator includes a step of measuring and storing a current position of the second actuator, and wherein the actuating step of the second actuator in said opposite direction is effected at most until the second actuator returns to said stored position.

6. (previously amended) A method according to claim 1,

wherein the method includes a step of monitoring at least one variable characteristic of a force produced by the second actuator during actuation thereof in said opposite direction, and a step of estimating at least one predetermined evaluation criterion relating to a characteristic variable or variables, and

wherein the method includes a step of actuating the second actuator in accordance with a predefined control instruction, ending the movement of the second actuator in the opposite direction, when at least one of the predetermined evaluation criteria is satisfied.

7. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 6, wherein said predetermined control instruction is an instruction chosen from a group consisting of a stoppage of the second actuator and a driving of the second actuator in said given direction.

8. (previously amended) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the second actuator consumes electric current and wherein at least one variable characteristic of the force produced is a variable characteristic of an electric current consumed by the second actuator chosen from a group consisting of an intensity consumed by the second actuator and a drift with respect to a time of the intensity consumed by the second actuator.

9. (currently amended) A seat having at least three seat elements able to move with respect to each other and at least two actuators for moving the three elements with respect to each other, wherein the seat further has

means of actuating a first actuator of said at least two actuators in one direction and

automatic means of actuating a second actuator of said at least two actuators ~~first of all~~ in a given direction and then in an opposite direction, whenever said first actuator is actuated in said one direction.

10. (previously amended) A seat according to Claim 9, further including:

a movable squab;

a back rest articulated on the squab;

a leg rest articulated on the squab;

a foot rest mounted so as to be able to move with respect to the leg rest; and

wherein said first actuator is adapted for a conjoint movement of the back rest and of the squab by providing a lowering of the squab when the back rest is raised up; and

wherein the second actuator is adapted for a movement of the foot rest with respect to the leg rest.

11. (previously amended) A seat according to Claim 9, further including:

a movable squab;

a back rest articulated on the squab;

a leg rest articulated on the squab; and

wherein said first actuator is adapted for a conjoint movement of the back rest and of the squab by providing a lowering of the squab when the back rest is raised up; and

wherein said second actuator is adapted for a movement of the leg rest with respect to the squab.

ATTACHMENT C
Amendments to the Drawings

The attached Replacement sheet of drawings for figure 2 includes a complete connecting line between elements 117 and 128 as required by the examiner.

This Replacement sheet replaces the originally filed corresponding sheet having the same figure.

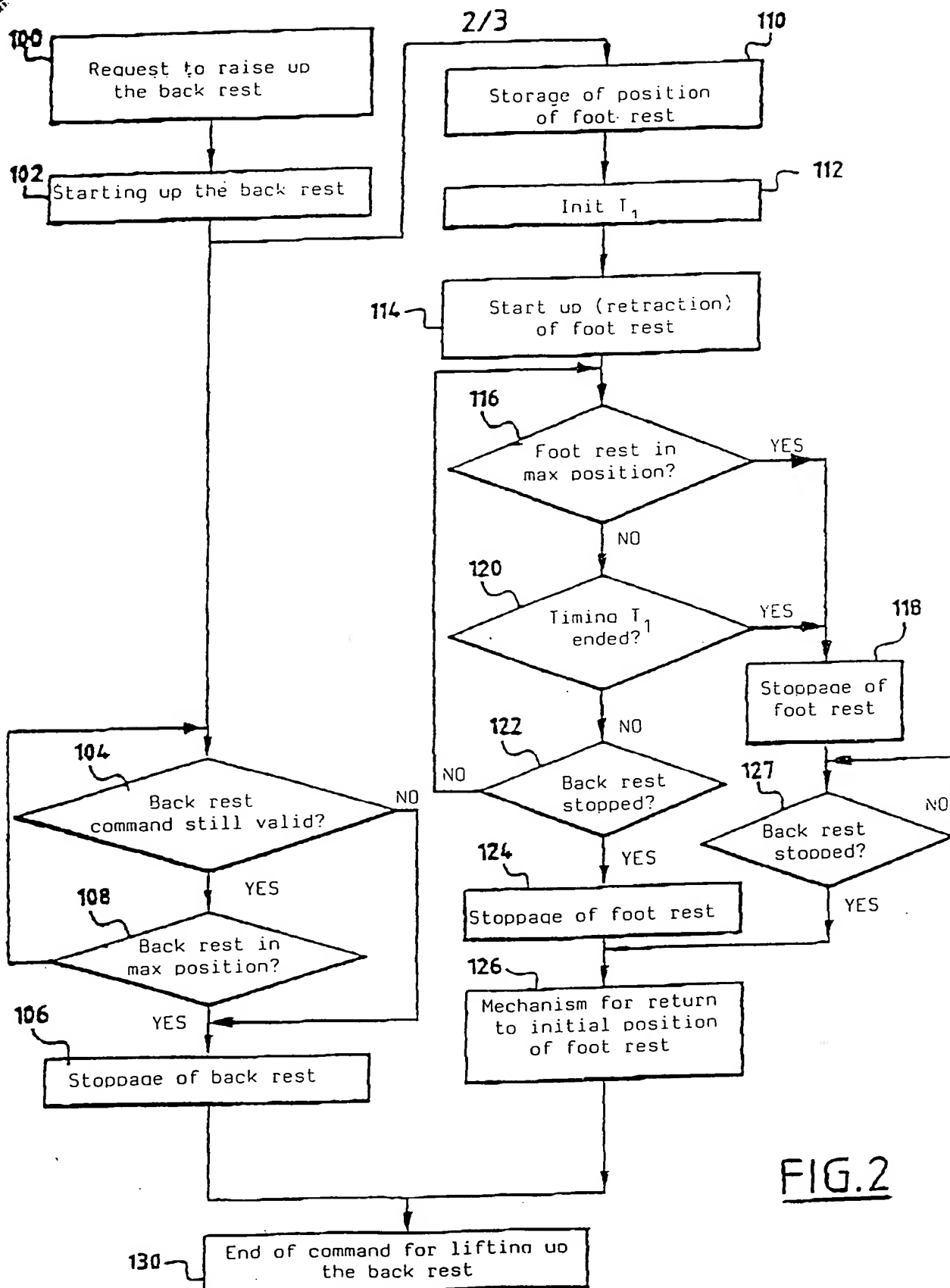


FIG. 2